



NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER,
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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December, 1996

96-8

THE PINAKES FROM LOCRI: SEX, DEATH AND THE GODDESS

Professor Bonnie MacLachlan, The University of Western Ontario

Thursday, January 9th, 8:00 PM

London Museum of Archaeology

For our first speaker night of 1997 we are pleased to present Dr. Bonnie MacLachlan of the Department of Classical Studies at The University of Western Ontario. She will be speaking on the archaeology of Locri, a Greek settlement in southern Italy that was occupied from the 8th century B.C.E. So start the New Year on a Classical note at **THE LONDON MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY**, 1600 Attawandaron Road (near the corner of Wonderland and Fanshawe Park Road in the northwest end of the city). Meeting time is 8 PM.

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Next Month: Our February meeting will be held on Thursday, February 13th at the London Museum of Archaeology at 8 PM. Our featured speaker will be Dr. Chris Ellis of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Western Ontario speaking on the archaeological implications of changing water levels in the Great Lakes during Paleo-Indian and Archaic times.

Chapter Executive

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ANNUAL RATES

Individual.....	\$15.00
Family.....	\$18.00
Institutional.....	\$21.00
Subscriber.....	\$17.00

EXECUTIVE REPORT

At the December meeting held during the Chapter's annual Christmas party all but one of the 1996 Chapter Executive were acclaimed for 1997. The only change occurred in the position of Secretary where Lorelyn Giese stepped down and was replaced by Karen Mattila. The Membership thanks Lorelyn for her many years of dedicated service.

Chapter Treasurer Harri Mattila reports that the financial report for 1996 will be presented at the next Speaker Night, on Thursday, January 9, 1997.

SOCIAL REPORT

The Chapter's Christmas party, hosted by Andrew and Christine Nelson was a huge success. There was great food and conversation and plenty of Christmas cheer! Many thanks to the Nelsons for the use of their beautiful home.

EDITOR'S REPORT

While some of us have put on a few pounds over the holidays, your editors report that the **KEWA** article file is getting thin. This means that it is time for all members to look through their backlog of unpublished reports for any reports or papers that might be suitable for publication in **KEWA**. While there are still a few articles on the back burner, we need several more to round out the 1997 year.

This month we are pleased to bring you another installment of the diaries of Moravian missionary Christian Frederick Denke describing his work among the Ojibwa of the Sydenham River drainage in the early 19th century. Long time **KEWA** readers will be familiar with Denke from sections of his journals previously published in **KEWA** issues 90-5, 91-7, 93-7, and 94-6. Newer members wishing background on Denke's work, and the Moravian mission in southwestern Ontario in general, should consult these back issues, or Elma and Leslie Gray's study, **Wilderness Christians: The Moravian Mission to the Delaware Indians** (1956). For a good review of 18th and 19th century Ojibwa history and an example of the archaeology of a late historic Ojibwa site, readers should refer to the Ferris, Kenyon, Prevec and Murphy article on the Bellamy site, published in **Ontario Archaeology** Number 44 (1985).

The Denke diaries, which are preserved on microfilm at the University of Western Ontario, were written in Old Script German. The current installment was translated by Chapter member Dr. Irmgard Jamnik, as were three of those previously published in **KEWA**. The editors thank Neal Ferris for his assistance in editing this issue, however, since these are historical documents, few substantive editorial changes were made to the text of the translation. While the journal describes many aspects of Ojibwa life that are of value to modern researchers, it also records the biases, preconceptions, and Eurocentric value judgements of the 19th century missionaries. Of course, modern readers must be aware of the social and political context in which these historical accounts were written and should be guided by caution and good sense in their use of this material.

OJIBWA MISSION REPORT
CHRISTIAN FREDERICK DENKE'S FIRST VISIT AMONG THE OJIBWA
1801

Translated from the Old German Script by Irmgard M. Jamnik ¹

Editor's Introduction

The document published here is a report describing the results of Christian Frederick Denke's first visit to the Ojibwa (Chippewa) living along the Sydenham River. It describes Denke's trip from the Moravian mission of Fairfield on the Thames River, to an un-named Ojibwa village on the Sydenham River (the Fairfield mission was established in 1792 to serve a refugee group of Christian Delaware). The report includes descriptions of the vegetation and terrain along the route, the village and the houses within it, methods of food preparation and food storage, along with several other interesting observations. It also contains a record of a fascinating dialogue among Denke, an Ojibwa elder, and some of the Christian Delaware who accompanied Denke on the trip. Of course, all of this is recorded through the evangelical eyes of Denke, and supplied with his own commentary, making it necessary for modern researchers to winnow the useful data from the opinions and preconceptions that are inherent in this type of historical document.

**Brother Christian Fr. Denke's report on his first visit to the Tschipues²
at the river Schnei Kaerty³, in June 1801.**

For a long time, it was my dearest wish to make a visit to the Tschipues living nearest to us, all the more as they themselves wished it; however, neither time nor circumstances permitted to undertake it sooner than in the middle of June. What happened between me and them before this visit has been

¹ The diary is written in the old German Script except for all proper names and words borrowed from the English language. The borrowed English words are between single quotation marks in the translation. All names are spelled as they are written in the manuscript. The German word *Geschwister*, meaning children (Brothers and/or Sisters) of a family, is an appellation - like Brother or Sister for members of religious societies - for mixed sex groups of a commune and for married missionary couples. It is thus translated as Brothers and Sisters or Brother and Sister [name].

² Denke calls the Ojibwa the Tschipues in this report.

³ Schnei Kaerty refers to the Sydenham River. On the map and in the text of the treaty from the 22nd of June, 1790, at L'Assomption, and in the District of Hesse (1992 reprint of **Indian Treaties and Surrenders**, 1891) the river Channail Ecarté corresponds perfectly with Denke's river Schnei Kaerty: "... from thence running Westward along the border of Lake Erie and up the Streight to the mouth of the river known by the name of Channail Ecarté and up the main branch of the said Channail Ecarté to the first fork on the south side, then a due east line until it intersects with the Rivière à la Tranche [Thames] ...".

already reported to the commune in the letters and in the diary of the local commune.

With hearty supplication to the Saviour for His support and gracious help and with the blessings of the local brethren and sisters, of the white ones as well as the brown ones, I dispatched on horseback from here in the morning of the 25th June. The Indian Brothers Joachim, Boas, and Tobias accompanied me and a Tschipue, who stays here with his wife, a baptized Delaware⁴ Indian, came along as a guide. We took the shortest trail through the bush, to the northwest of Fairfield. Though it is not long, (it may amount to only 10 English miles) it is, however, extremely arduous. One encounters swamps, beaver dams, and fallen trees very frequently; the trail is also trodden out very poorly and hardly visible at several places. The dense underbrush and the low branches, as well as the necessity of riding around to get through the swamps where possible, also the frequent jumping of the horses over large fallen trees, in several places as many as six or seven tumbled close to each other, make it very difficult for the traveller. Add to this the gnats (mosquitoes) which greet the travellers in countless swarms and pester them very much through their irritable bites. In these dark swamps, they are right at home; one has constantly to fight against them and has not one moment of peace. We made it a little easier for us as the walkers carried pieces of rotten, smouldering wood which heavily smokes either in their hands or bound to a stick with bast on their shoulder. Already within the first miles, my horse got stuck twice in the swamps so deep that it was hard to get it out. After that, an Indian Brother offered to guide it always through the swamps to sound them out beforehand and I accepted gladly.

About five miles from Fairfield, there is a great 'plain' or 'prairie' overgrown with grass as tall as a man but it has marshy soil so that one cannot pass through with dry feet.

The wood here consists mainly of beeches, birches (stone or black birches), lindens, water and white ashes, elm of various species, oaks, especially water and swamp oaks, walnuts, wild cherries, aspens, Italian poplars (Lombardy poplar) or a variety of them; one also finds white and black oaks, chestnuts, and exceptionally big and tall tulip trees (poplar). The land is completely bare of stones.

For the hunt sake, the Tschipues, who still own this land, set on fire whole stretches of bush annually, as then the undergrowth burns off almost completely. Sugar trees one finds less frequently but wild (grape) vine tendrils of very considerable thickness are frequent. I saw flowers in abundance everywhere among which many were unknown and new to me. Bracken grows everywhere and is very troublesome for the clearing and cultivating of the land because of their thick bundles of roots.

Toward noon we reached the river Schnei Kaerty and went downstream alongside it. The land gets here a little drier and carries more oaks, hickories, and other dry habitat species of timber; I also noticed here a hazel bush on which the husks of the nuts have a beaked tip (*Corylus rostrata* Ait.). It is at home mostly only in the southern regions.

From the accounts of the Indians and also by conjecture, I could conclude that the two rivers, the

⁴ Delaware is Denke's spelling of Delaware.

Thames and the Schnei Kaerty, run almost parallel; their entries are into the Lake St. Clair; the latter empties itself there where the two lakes, Huron and St. Clair, are linked by the River St. Clair. Schnei Kaerty has lower banks than the Thames and therefore the bottoms, since they are laying lower, may well be more subjected to inundations. Its bed is, for the most part, of flattened stones and the water clearer than the water of the Thames by Fairfield.

About 2 o'clock we reached the Indian 'town' and camped at a short distance from it. The settlement consists of seven houses of which two are built a short way down the river. They stand very irregularly and in a cluster so close together that only a small passage is between them. Two of them are from hewn, thin timber, the rest have a house like a framework of poles covered with bark. In the middle of the house, the fire is made. They do not have floor or plank beds but sit and lie on the ground. In such a house, 5 or 6 families often live together. They observe, however, a proper order in their homes: a man sits by his wife, next to him sits another man and next to him his wife; in this way they sit in a circle so that always two men and two women sit together. Unmarried ones and visitors get assigned a seat between two of their own sex. The children sit partly before and partly behind their parents. They have no doors at their houses but an old hide or a piece of bark is hanging before the small opening instead. Under the roof, there are poles on which the fresh meat, intestines, etc. are dried. Nothing is lost of a deer but they eat everything. For the most part of the year, they live on fish whose bones and other offal get thrown close to the houses and cause an evil odour. They like to rub themselves with the fat or train-oil of the sturgeon and therefore, smell very unpleasant.

They grow only a little corn till now and live mainly from wildlife. Near their 'town', because the river makes a bend there, is a small 'bottom' where they make their plantations. Here the local inhabitant as well as distant ones plant together annually hardly as much as perhaps an Indian Brother plants in Fairfield. As they plant only little corn for their livelihood and live mostly from the hunt, which is very unreliable, so they [are] often facing starvation and then they travel around begging. If they are going hunting from home and leave behind a small corn-supply, they have the habit to keep it in underground pits lined with bark.

At a short distance from the town, there is a good spring; otherwise they are mostly drinking river water. Close to the houses, very big and tall trees stand so that our Indians were surprised that they did not fell them because of the danger in a storm. Lots of grass grows near the houses in which the snakes, who are more frequent here than at Fairfield, like to stay.

They do not have domestic animals except dogs.

At present, there are living here only ten men who, with their wives and children, make up about 30 persons. Four of them were at home, the rest, and also the chief, were absent. This chief has not much authority and is under the authority of grand chief Nangi. As he is not very understanding and seldom at home, he shall be dismissed this autumn. An old man who lays claim to the chief-rank came to us soon after our arrival and invited us to lodge in the chief's empty house. This we accepted. The women went out to strip bark which served us a floor, and a smoky fire was made in a small fireplace. Soon they brought us dried meat which they had in stock at present, as they just came back from the

hunt. This meat is fresh roasted on spits before the fire, then pulled to pieces and laid in the open air again to dry out. It is not at all salted but keeps very well this way and looks like oakum or rope pulled to pieces.

Soon we had a visit of a snake which took its way over Brother Boas who was sleeping but it was killed by the other Brothers. In the evening, three more men came home. In the following night, the sandflies plagued us so much that we could not sleep despite of making smoke continuously.

On the 26th in the morning, it was raining heavily. After they had bought us a deer head cooked with corn for breakfast and we had eaten, I let come to me the seven men and spoke to them in the following way:

Friends and Brothers! I come to you in the name of God Who created all things; He sent me to you and I shall tell you Great Words in His name. Mine and your Brothers who love you very much told me to go to you. Since many years, these our Brothers have already sent teachers to your grandfather⁵ (the Delewares) to tell them the Great Words. That has happened and many of your grandfathers liked to hear these Great Words and become believers. Then only these Great Words of our Father who lives above can save you.

Brothers! Only so that you might be saved too, your Brothers who are living far from here and who love you very much have sent me to tell you the Great Words too. Therefore, I come, out of love for you, to you leaving my friends and acquaintances. Now you wish, and I also wish, to stay with you to learn your language so that I may be able to tell you the Great Words better and to teach your children what is good and useful.

Brothers! I do not come to own your land or your hunting grounds but solely to tell you the Great Words of God, our Creator, who became also our Saviour. If you will now hear and accept these Words, they will do you good. I am glad that I can see you today and talk with you. I could not leave your grandfather in his town (Fairfield) sooner but now I came.

Hereupon the old man mentioned before replied:

We are very glad to hear these good words which you spoke to us and although we are very poor, we are, however, pleased but we can do nothing by ourselves; as soon as our chief comes home, we will tell him everything. We are also glad on account of our children and young people. But our chief cannot act by himself; he has first to ask the grand chief (Nangi) who has command over us all; what he says we will do.

⁵ "Grandfather" (Mochomes) is the name given to the Delaware by those Algonquian tribes which claimed descent from them (John R. Swanton, **The Indian Tribes of North America**, 1952).

After he had again strongly expressed their joy and thanks for my visit and speech, he continued:

As we are so very wicked, which we know very well, so it could be possible that our chief may say: You cannot live and behave the way as God demands from you.

I answered:

Nobody is so wicked that he could not mend his ways and get saved provided that is what he longs for. Therefore, the Creator of all things, He Himself came into the world, became man, suffered, bled, and died, was buried, rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God. Who believes in him will be saved; he may be whoever he is and however he is; no one is excluded.

He replied:

But we are given to drunkenness too much; we guzzle away everything that we earned through hunting and sugar-boiling and thereby come in bad circumstances so that we are sometimes almost starving.

Answer:

That is true; you are spiritually and materially poor; and that you love so much to guzzle, I know well; thereby you worsen your circumstances more and more. But the only way to address this noxious evil is that you accept the Word of God and become obedient to it; then strength will be bestowed upon you to resist all these.

Further he said:

Our children and our young people refuse to obey us though we punish them. On their account we cannot keep domestic animals because they kill them at once. We also often talk with one another that it would be better to live more together than to lie scattered around in the bush but we cannot accomplish it and in the twinkling of an eye, we scatter again. If we look at our grandfather's town (Fairfield), how well he lives and how happy he is, no doubt, because he has teachers who tell him the Word of God and therefore, he is better than we. We would gladly like to live as our forefathers commanded us but we cannot do so.

Answer:

As regards the first matter, the disobedience of your children, I will tell you that can be helped somewhat if you have a teacher who holds school for the youth and admonished the children's obedience of the Word of God. As for the latter, namely the improved conditions of your grandfather, I will let himself speak.

Then the Indian Brothers talked to them as follows:

Grandchildren, it is true that we live better than you; we have cows, which give us milk and butter, and pigs which give us fat and meat. We live together at one place, have large plantations, grow plenty of corn and so have always enough to eat for us and our children. In former times we did not live so, we also were continually wandering about, but now since we have teachers who instruct us in the Word of God and the Great Words which save us for eternity, and who gave us instructions how we could improve our outward (material) conditions so we act upon, are obedient to them and feeling well. This is the reason we live together in a town. After we have heard the Great Words from our teachers and believe in God, our Saviour, we can be no more without the teachers. We have to hear the Great Words every day and be taught in the same. That unites us, keeps us together and binds us with our teachers.

Grandchild, if, therefore, you take our advice and, for the sake of yourself and your children, accept the Word of God and receive the teacher whom God sends you, because they tell you what you must do to be blessed here in the world and one day eternally, then you will soon see the great benefit for you and your children.

Answer of the old man:

Grandfather, we heard your words; they are good and fair and we believe it is, no doubt, the best for us to take your advice to accept the Word of God and to work for our living. Should we old ones not be able to give up our wicked way of life, so our children will, maybe, become better people as we are if they will be taught.

Thereupon the Indian Brothers showed their approval to that which he had said. Now the old man turned again to me:

We have much more to say to you but, at present, we will add only a little. Because we are such wicked people, our forefathers told us that we must offer sacrifices to become pleasing to God. For that purpose, every now and then, we hold great festivals to which we invite all our friends and acquaintances of several days' distance. Then we butcher a dog because that is our favorite animal, burn his pelt and eat all the rest. After the meal we must dance for a long time around that pole (here he pointed to a pole standing near the chief's house, about 15 feet tall) and at the same time to sing fortissimo [in a loud voice]. Thereby we make ourselves acceptable to God. We also have to sing and dance around the other poles which you see, if someone of us is sick, so that he may get well again.

(The first pole which he mentioned had on top a carved, red painted, human face turned toward sundown; the remaining part was painted with red, snakelike stripes. The latter poles of which three are standing here are also painted and have still their crown on top.)

Answer:

These your sacrifices, God detest; therewith you serve the devil; God demands no sacrifice from you but he wants that you should accept His Word which we tell you now and always believe; so He will be merciful to you.

Whereupon the Indian Brothers spoke again:

Grandchild, you know when Indians deliver 'speeches', so they are accompanied by wampums; that is not so with us; when our teachers give their hand, that confirms more than wampum.

I stood up and gave everyone my hand.

Now they proceeded in their speech:

Grandchild, your grandfather in his town (Fairfield) is very glad to have seen and spoken with you today and in conclusion of our talk, let us smoke the peace-pipe together and with our Brother.

Now tobacco was distributed among them. A part for the chief was also kept in confirmation of the words. The conversation with them lasted three hours.

I learned soon afterward that they discoursed still with one another on what they had heard and expressed to give up gladly all their heathen manners and customs except one, without which they could hardly exist unless they get convinced through the Great Word that it is unnecessary. Only one thing was still in the way: they said that a Tschipue from Montreal came to them a year ago and said never to give up the old manners and customs because it happened that some among them at Montreal had tried it and had promised a Catholic father to live according to the Christian religion but they soon got sick and died; only he had again reverted immediately to the old manners and customs and thus survived. I told them that this, for sure, was not the cause of their death but likely a infectious epidemic or disease which came over them. By the way, they know very well that the Indians are big liars.

I looked at three burial places near the 'town'. Two of them are very close to the houses. I counted 20 graves in all. Several of them are under a roof of bark which rest on poles.⁶ Over the graves, there lay either thin logs, whose ends are painted red, one upon the other in the form of a roof; or approximately four feet high [a] roof of split planks is made, and where the planks link together along

⁶ Rev. Peter Jones describes in his **History of the Ojibway Indians** (1861) these type of graves: "... and on top of it [the graves] poles or sticks are placed lengthways, to the height of about two feet, over which birch bark or mats form a covering to secure the body from the rain."

the peak of the roof, there lies a pole into which the planks are inserted; the gable ends are closed up too and have a round hole. These graves are honorary monuments to their chiefs. If a chief was a great warrior during his lifetime, his tomb gets painted with red, snail-shaped lines after his death. A fire is often made before these graves.

It cannot be denied that they are a most unclean folk. I noticed that when they louse themselves or catch fleas, they kill this vermin not in the manner customary to most people of other nations but rather they take them in their mouth, crush them with their teeth, and spit them out again when they have killed a lot in their mouth. Their bowls, spoons and kettles get only licked off by their dogs. But they washed out those from which we ate. Although I well know about their uncleanness which arouses great disgust in Europeans, so I ate heartily with them and overcame this disgust, luckily.

After they had served us a meal again, we got ready for our departure but took a different trail of about 10 to 11 English miles which comes out nine miles below Fairfield on the river. This trail we found not only longer but also even more untrodden, wetter, and swampier. Often we had a hard time to get my horse through the swamps. In the evening, we arrived safely and in high spirits in Fairfield and with all our heart thankful to our Saviour for His grace and staunch assistance and His loyalty to us poor people.

It is most regrettable to see the universally miserable, pitiful, and deplorable condition of the Tschipues. They live in the most awful superstition, in all the horrors and vices of heathenism, in unbelief and idolatry. The prince of darkness has his throne among them and has absolute rule. I heard from themselves that they kill and eat one another at the times of their great feasts. This cannibalism they like to commit especially on prisoners.

Therefore, they are in some respect wickeder than other local Indian nations and themselves known this to some extent and they speak about this. However, they seem not to have the pride of the Delewares to the same degree. It is to wish with all one's heart that our Saviour shows them mercy soon and let the hour of grace come also for them, for their souls are in His eyes precious too; He saved them too.

Addenda

On the 11th July, being on business in Detroit, I had a talk with nine chiefs of the Tschipues and the Tawas.⁷ Those actually form only one nation and have quite close ties with each other. Their language differs only in a few words and they understand each other very well. Those and still another four chiefs of the Tawas from the Miami⁸ were here on business.

⁷ Tawa is a synonym for the Odawa.

⁸Miami refers to the Maumee River, Michigan.

With childlike and sincere prayer and supplication that He may let this talk turn out for the best and for the propagation, proclamation, and glorification of His name, I talked with them about the purpose of my mission. The Saviour directed their hearts and they willingly spoke in a friendly way. Nangi, the first chief, assured me how very dear these words were to him and that they are glad about them; thereupon he continued:

You have to know that I am the grand chief; if we are sitting in 'council', all the others look at me to see what I am saying and doing. Now I tell you I receive you gladly and even if no other chief joins, so I call together all my folk and my young people and accept you.

He already defined the place where I should live. He confirmed these words the following days. But I heard nothing further because he went hunting. Nangi is an understanding chief, having only surrendered himself to drink which is generally the case with their chiefs. I was glad to have talked with them at this sober hour.

My heart was ashamed and full of submission and thanks towards our merciful Saviour who so graciously heard the sincere prayers of the commune in today's watchword:⁹ Lord! Listen to my words, perceive my utterances, hear my crying, my King and my God. The text was also very fitting and lovely and direct us to entrust everything childlike to our Lord with prayer, supplications, and thanksgiving. Don't be worried but, in all things, let know God your petition in prayer and supplication.

In conclusion, I will recommend myself and the Tschipue project to the true and dear memory and prayer of all brethren and sisters in the commune and remain

your humble Brother
Christian Fr. Denke.

⁹ In 1728 Zinzendorf suggested that the Scripture verse or hymn stanza which had served as the theme of his address in the evening service be used as the watchword (Losung) for the next day. From this evolved the Daily Texts (Losungen), a devotional guide-book with a selection of Old and New Testament Text and hymn verses (watchwords) for each day of the year. The first edition was published from Herrnhut, Saxony, in 1731. Since that date this devotional guide-book has been printed without interruption, and distributed to the Moravian congregations throughout the world.